

RANDOM HOUSE *e*BOOKS



The Accidental Billionaires

Ben Mezrich

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About the Book

Eduardo Saverin and Mark Zuckerberg - an awkward maths prodigy and a painfully shy computer genius - were the archetypal social misfits of polished, elite Harvard. Yet one day master-hacker Mark created a rateable database of female students, which was so popular it crashed the university's server. Narrowly escaping expulsion, the two friends refocused the site into something less controversial - 'The Facebook' - and watched as it spread like a wildfire across campuses around the country and beyond. Suddenly *everyone* - from hot girls to venture capitalists - wanted to know Eduardo and Mark.

Yet amidst the popularity, cash, glamour and power, what began as a simple argument spiralled into an out-and-out war. The great irony is that Facebook succeeded by bringing people together - but its very success tore two best friends apart.

About the Author

Ben Mezrich, a Harvard graduate, has published ten books, including the *New York Times* bestseller *Bringing Down the House*. He is a columnist for *Boston Common* and a contributor to *Flush* magazine. Ben lives in Boston with his wife, Tonya.

Also by Ben Mezrich

Rigged

Breaking Vegas

Ugly Americans

Bringing Down the House

The Carrier

Skeptic

Fertile Ground

Skin [an *X-files* book]

Reaper

Threshold

THE
**ACCIDENTAL
BILLIONAIRES**

SEX, MONEY, BETRAYAL AND THE FOUNDING OF FACEBOOK

Ben Mezrich



arrow books

**TO TONYA,
THIS GEEK'S DREAM GIRL ...**

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The Accidental Billionaires is a dramatic, narrative account based on dozens of interviews, hundreds of sources, and thousands of pages of documents, including records from several court proceedings.

There are a number of different—and often contentious—opinions about some of the events that took place. Trying to paint a scene from the memories of dozens of sources—some direct witnesses, some indirect—can often lead to discrepancies. I re-created the scenes in the book based on the information I uncovered from documents and interviews, and my best judgment as to what version most closely fits the documentary record. Other scenes are written in a way that describes individual perceptions without endorsing them.

I have tried to keep the chronology as close to exact as possible. In some instances, details of settings and descriptions have been changed or imagined, and identifying details of certain people altered to protect their privacy. Other than the handful of public figures who populate this story, names and personal descriptions have been altered.

I do employ the technique of re-created dialogue. I have based this dialogue on the recollections of participants of the substance of conversations. Some of the conversations recounted in this book took place over long periods of time, in multiple locations, and thus some conversations and scenes were re-created and compressed. Rather than spread these conversations out, I sometimes set these scenes in likely settings.

I address sources more fully in the acknowledgments, but it is appropriate here to thank in particular Will McMullen for introducing me to Eduardo Saverin, without whom this story could not have been written. Mark Zuckerberg, as is his perfect right, declined to speak with me for this book despite numerous requests.

CHAPTER 1 | OCTOBER 2003

IT WAS PROBABLY the third cocktail that did the trick. It was hard for Eduardo to tell for sure, because the three drinks had come in such rapid succession—the empty plastic cups were now stacked accordion style on the windowsill behind him—that he hadn't been able to gauge for certain when the change had occurred. But there was no denying it now, the evidence was all over him. The pleasantly warm flush to his normally sallow cheeks; the relaxed, almost rubbery way he leaned against the window—a stark contrast to his usual calcified, if slightly hunched posture; and most important of all, the easy smile on his face, something he'd practiced unsuccessfully in the mirror for two hours before he'd left his dorm room that evening. No doubt at all, the alcohol had taken effect, and Eduardo wasn't scared anymore. At the very least, he was no longer overwhelmed with the intense urge *to get the fuck out of there*.

To be sure, the room in front of him was intimidating: the immense crystal chandelier hanging from the arched, cathedral ceiling; the thick red velvet carpeting that seemed to bleed right out of the regal mahogany walls; the meandering, bifurcated staircase that snaked up toward the storied, ultrasecret, catacombed upper floors. Even the windowpanes behind Eduardo's head seemed treacherous, lit from behind by the flickering anger of a bonfire consuming most of the narrow courtyard outside, twists of flame licking at the ancient, pockmarked glass.

This was a terrifying place, especially for a kid like Eduardo. He hadn't grown up poor—he'd spent most of his childhood being shuttled between upper-middle-class communities in Brazil and Miami before matriculating at

Harvard—but he was a complete stranger to the sort of old-world opulence this room represented. Even through the booze, Eduardo could feel the insecurities rumbling deep down in the pit of his stomach. He felt like a freshman all over again, stepping into Harvard Yard for the first time, wondering what the hell he was doing there, wondering how he could possibly belong in a place like that. *How he could possibly belong in a place like this.*

He shifted against the sill, scanning the crowd of young men that filled most of the cavernous room. A mob, really, bunched together around the pair of makeshift bars that had been set up specifically for the event. The bars themselves were fairly shoddy—wooden tables that were little more than slabs, starkly out of character in such an austere setting—but nobody noticed, because the bars were staffed by the only girls in the room; matching, bust-heavy blondes in low-cut black tops, brought in from one of the local all-female colleges to cater to the mob of young men.

The mob, in many ways, was even more frightening than the building itself. Eduardo couldn't tell for sure, but he guessed there had to be about two hundred of them—all male, all dressed in similar dark blazers and equally dark slacks. Sophomores, mostly; a mix of races, but there was something very similar about all the faces—the smiles that seemed so much easier than Eduardo's, the confidence in those two hundred pairs of eyes—these kids weren't used to having to prove themselves. *They belonged.* For most of them, this party—this place—was just a formality.

Eduardo took a deep breath, wincing slightly at the bitter tinge to the air. The ash from the bonfire outside was making its way through the windowpanes, but he didn't move away from his perch against the sill, not yet. He wasn't ready yet.

Instead, he let his attention settle on the group of blazers closest to him—four kids of medium build. He didn't recognize any of them from his classes; two of the kids

were blond and preppy-looking, like they'd just stepped off a train from Connecticut. The third was Asian, and seemed a little older, but it was hard to tell for sure. The fourth, however—African American and very polished-looking, from his grin to his perfectly coiffed hair—was definitely a senior.

Eduardo felt his back stiffen, and he glanced toward the black kid's tie. The color of the material was all the verification Eduardo needed. The kid was a senior, and it was time for Eduardo to make his move.

Eduardo straightened his shoulders and pushed off of the sill. He nodded at the two Connecticut kids and the Asian, but his attention remained focused on the older kid—and his solid black, uniquely decorated tie.

"Eduardo Saverin." Eduardo introduced himself, vigorously shaking the kid's hand. "Great to meet you."

The kid responded with his own name, Darron something, which Eduardo filed away in the back of his memory. The kid's name didn't really matter; the tie alone told him everything he needed to know. The purpose of this entire evening lay in the little white birds that speckled the solid black material. The tie designated him as a member of the Phoenix-S K; he was one of twenty or so hosts of the evening's affair, who were scattered among the two hundred sophomore men.

"Saverin. You're the one with the hedge fund, right?"

Eduardo blushed, but inside he was thrilled that the Phoenix member recognized his name. It was a bit of an exaggeration—he didn't have a hedge fund, he'd simply made some money investing with his brother during his sophomore summer—but he wasn't going to correct the mistake. If the Phoenix members were talking about him, if somehow they were impressed by what they'd heard—well, maybe he had a chance.

It was a heady thought, and Eduardo's heart started to beat a little harder as he tried to spread just the right

amount of bullshit to keep the senior interested. More than any test he'd taken freshman or sophomore year, this moment was going to define his future. Eduardo knew what it would mean to gain entrance to the Phoenix—for his social status during his last two years of college, and for his future, whatever future he chose to chase.

Like the secret societies at Yale that had gotten so much press over the years, the Final Clubs were the barely kept secret soul of campus life at Harvard; housed in centuries-old mansions spread out across Cambridge, the eight all-male clubs had nurtured generations of world leaders, financial giants, and power brokers. Almost as important, membership in one of the eight clubs granted an instant social identity; each of the clubs had a different personality, from the ultra-exclusive Porcellian, the oldest club on campus, whose members had names like Roosevelt and Rockefeller, to the prepped-out Fly Club, which had spawned two presidents and a handful of billionaires, each of the clubs had its own distinct, and instantly defining, power. The Phoenix, for its part, wasn't the most prestigious of the clubs, but in many ways it was the social king of the hill; the austere building at 323 Mt. Auburn Street was the destination of choice on Friday and Saturday nights, and if you were a member of the Phoenix, not only were you a part of a century-old network, you also got to spend your weekends at the best parties on campus, surrounded by the hottest girls culled from schools all over the 02138 zip code.

"The hedge fund is a hobby, really," Eduardo humbly confided as the small group of blazers hung on his words. "We focus mostly on oil futures. See, I've always been obsessed with the weather, and I made a few good hurricane predictions that the rest of the market hadn't quite picked up on."

Eduardo knew he was walking a fine line, trying to minimize the geekiness of how he'd actually outguessed the

oil market; he knew the Phoenix member wanted to hear about the three hundred thousand dollars Eduardo had made trading oil, not the nerdish obsession with meteorology that had made the trades possible. But Eduardo also wanted to show off a little; Darron's mention of his "hedge fund" only confirmed what Eduardo had already suspected, that the only reason he was in that room in the first place was his reputation as a budding businessman.

Hell, he knew he didn't have much else going for him. He wasn't an athlete, didn't come from a long line of legacies, and certainly wasn't burning up the social scene. He was gawky, his arms were a little too long for his body, and he only really relaxed when he drank. But still, he was there, in that room. A year late—most people were "punched" during the fall of their sophomore year, not as juniors like Eduardo—but he was there just the same.

The whole punch process had taken him by surprise. Just two nights before, Eduardo had been sitting at his desk in his dorm room, working on a twenty-page paper about some bizarre tribe that lived in the Amazonian rain forest, when an invitation had suddenly appeared under his door. It wasn't anything like a fairy-tale golden ticket—of the two hundred mostly sophomores who were invited to the first punch party, only twenty or so would emerge as new members of the Phoenix—but the moment was as thrilling to Eduardo as when he had opened his Harvard acceptance letter. He'd been hoping for a shot at one of the clubs since he'd gotten to Harvard, and now, finally, he'd gotten that shot.

Now it was just up to him—and, of course, the kids wearing the black, bird-covered ties. Each of the four punch events—like tonight's meet-and-greet cocktail party—was a sort of mass interview. After Eduardo and the rest of the invitees were sent home to their various dorms spread across the campus, the Phoenix members would

convene in one of the secret rooms upstairs to deliberate their fates. After each event, a smaller and smaller percentage of the punched would get the next invitation—and slowly, the two hundred would be weeded down to twenty.

If Eduardo made the cut, his life would change. And if it took some creative “elaboration” of a summer spent analyzing barometric changes and predicting how those changes would affect oil distribution patterns—well, Eduardo wasn’t above a little applied creativity.

“The real trick is figuring out how to turn three hundred thousand into three million.” Eduardo grinned. “But that’s the fun of hedge funds. You get to be real inventive.”

He delved into the bullshit with full enthusiasm, carrying the whole group of blazers with him. He’d honed his bullshit skills over numerous prepunch parties as a freshman and sophomore; the trick was to forget that this was no longer a dry run—that this was the real thing. In his head, he tried to pretend he was back at one of those less important mixers, when he wasn’t yet being judged, when he wasn’t trying to end up on some all-important list. He could remember one, in particular, that had gone incredibly well; a Caribbean-themed party, with faux palm trees and sand on the floor. He tried to put himself back there—remembering the less imposing details of the decor, remembering how simple and easy the conversation had come. Within moments, he felt himself relaxing even more, allowing himself to become enrapt in his own story, the sound of his own voice.

He was back at that Caribbean party, down to the last detail. He remembered the reggae music bouncing off the walls, the sound of steel drums biting at his ears. He remembered the rum-based punch, the girls in flowered bikinis.

He even remembered the kid with the mop of curly hair who had been standing in a corner of the room, barely ten

feet away from where he was now, watching his progress, trying to get up the nerve to follow his lead and approach one of the older Phoenix kids before it was too late. But the kid had never moved from the corner; in fact, his self-defeating awkwardness had been so palpable, it had acted like a force field, carving out an area of the room around him, a sort of reverse magnetism, pushing anyone nearby away.

Eduardo had felt a tinge of sympathy at the time—because he had recognized that kid with the curly hair—and because there was no way in hell a kid like that was ever going to get into the Phoenix. A kid like that had no business punching any of the Final Clubs—God only knew what he had been doing there at the prepunch party in the first place. Harvard had plenty of little niches for kids like that; computer labs, chess guilds, dozens of underground organizations and hobbies catering to every imaginable twist of social impairment. One look at the kid, and it had been obvious to Eduardo that he didn't know the first thing about the sort of social networking one had to master to get into a club like the Phoenix.

But then, as now, Eduardo had been too busy chasing his dream to spend much time thinking about the awkward kid in the corner.

Certainly, he had no way of knowing, then or now, that the kid with the curly hair was one day going to take the entire concept of a social network and turn it on its head. That one day, the kid with the curly hair struggling through that prepunch party was going to change Eduardo's life more than any Final Club ever could.

CHAPTER 2 | HARVARD YARD

TEN MINUTES PAST one in the morning, and something had gone terribly wrong with the decorations. It wasn't just that the ribbons of white-and blue-colored crepe paper attached to the walls had started to droop—one of them bowing so low that its taffeta-like curls threatened to overwhelm the oversize punch bowl perched below—but now the brightly designed decorative posters that covered much of the bare space between the crepe paper had also begun to unhinge and drop to the floor at an alarming rate. In some areas, the beige carpet had almost vanished beneath piles of glossy computer-printed pages.

On closer inspection, the catastrophe of the decorations made more sense; the peeling strips of packing tape that held the colored posters and crepe-paper ribbons in place were clearly visible, and what's more, a sheen of condensation was slowly working the strips of tape free as the heat from the overworked radiators that lined the walls played havoc with the hastily constructed ambience.

The heat was necessary, of course, because it was New England in October. The banner hanging from the ceiling above the dying posters was all warmth—ALPHA EPSILON PI, MEET AND GREET, 2003—but there was no way a banner could compete with the ice that had begun to form on the oversize windows lining the back wall of the cavernous lecture room. All in all, the decorating committee had done what they could with the room—normally home to numerous philosophy and history classes, lodged as it was deep into the fifth floor of an aging building in Harvard Yard. They'd carted away the row upon row of scuffed wooden chairs and dilapidated desks, tried to cover up the

bland, chipped walls with posters and crepe, and put up the banner, concealing most of the ugly, oversize fluorescent ceiling lights. Topping it all off, there was the coup de grâce; an iPod player attached to two enormous and expensive-looking speakers set on the little stage at the head of the room, where the professor's lectern usually stood.

Ten minutes to one in the morning, and the iPod was churning away, filling the air with a mixture of pop and anachronistic folk rock—either the result of a schizophrenic's playlist or some bickering committee members' poorly thought-out compromise. Even so, the music wasn't half bad—and the speakers were a minor coup brought about by whoever was in charge of the entertainment. A previous year's shindig had featured a color television in the back corner of the classroom, hooked up to a borrowed DVD of Niagara Falls playing on an infinite loop. No matter that Niagara Falls had nothing even remotely to do with Alpha Epsilon Pi or Harvard; the sound of running water had somehow seemed party appropriate, and it hadn't cost the committee a dime.

The speaker system was an upgrade—as were the peeling posters. The party, on the other hand, was par for the course.

Eduardo stood beneath the banner, thin slacks hanging down over his storkish legs, an oxford shirt buttoned all the way up to his throat. Surrounding him were four similarly attired guys, mostly juniors and sophomores. Together, the small group made up a full third of the party. Somewhere, on the other side of the room, there were two or three girls in the mix. One of them had even dared to wear a skirt to the event—although she'd chosen to wear it over thick gray leggings, out of respect for the weather.

It wasn't exactly a scene from *Animal House*, but then, underground fraternity life at Harvard was a far cry from the Greek bacchanalia one might find at other colleges.

And Epsilon Pi wasn't exactly the pearl of the undergrounds; as the reigning Jewish frat on campus, its membership was more notorious for its combined grade-point average than its party proclivities. This reputation had nothing to do with its nominal religious leanings; the truly pious Jews, the ones who kept kosher and dated only within the tribe, joined Hillel House, which had its own building on campus and sported a true endowment, not to mention both male and female members. Epsilon Pi was for the secular kids, the ones whose last names were their most recognizably Jewish feature. To the Epsilon Pi kids, a Jewish girlfriend might be nice because it would make Mom and Dad happy. But, in reality, an Asian girlfriend was much more likely.

Which was exactly what Eduardo was explaining to the frat brothers surrounding him—a topic of conversation they'd revisited fairly frequently, because it hinged on a philosophy they could all get behind.

"It's not that guys like me are generally attracted to Asian girls," Eduardo commented, between sips of punch. "It's that Asian girls are generally attracted to guys like me. And if I'm trying to optimize my chances of scoring with the hottest girl possible, I've got to stock my pond with the type of girls who are the most likely to be interested."

The other kids nodded, appreciating his logic. In the past, they'd taken this simple equation and elaborated it into a much more complex algorithm to try to explain the connection between Jewish guys and Asian girls, but tonight they just let it remain simple, perhaps out of respect for the music, which was now reverberating so loudly through the expensive speakers that it was hard to engage in any complex thought.

"Although at the moment"—Eduardo grimaced as he glanced toward the girl in the skirt-leggings combination—"this pond's running a little dry."

Again, agreement all around, but it wasn't like any of his four frat mates were going to do anything about the situation. The kid to Eduardo's right was five foot six and pudgy; he was also on the Harvard chess team and spoke six languages fluently, but none of that seemed to help when it came to communicating with girls. The kid next to him drew a cartoon strip for the *Crimson*—and spent most of his free time playing RPG video games in the student lounge above the Leverett House dining hall. The cartoonist's roommate, standing next to him, was well over six feet tall; but instead of basketball, he'd chosen fencing as a high school student at a mostly Jewish prep school; he was good with an épée, which was about as useful when it came to picking up girls as it was in any other aspect of modern life. If eighteenth-century pirates ever attacked a hot girl's dorm room, he was ready, but otherwise he was pretty much useless.

The fourth kid, standing directly across from Eduardo, had also fenced—at Exeter—but he wasn't built anything like the tall kid to his left. He was a bit on the gawky side, like Eduardo, though his legs and arms were more proportionate to his slim, not entirely unathletic frame. He was wearing cargo shorts instead of slacks, sandals with no socks. He had a prominent nose, a mop of curly blondish brown hair, and light blue eyes. There was something playful about those eyes—but that was where any sense of natural emotion or readability ended. His narrow face was otherwise devoid of any expression at all. And his posture, his general aura—the way he seemed closed in on himself, even while engaged in a group dynamic, even here, in the safety of his own fraternity—was almost painfully awkward.

His name was Mark Zuckerberg, he was a sophomore, and although Eduardo had spent a fair amount of time at various Epsilon Pi events with him, along with at least one prepunch Phoenix event that Eduardo could remember, he still barely knew the kid. Mark's reputation, however,

definitely preceded him: a computer science major who lived in Eliot House, Mark had grown up in the upper-middle-class town of Dobbs Ferry, New York, the son of a dentist and a psychiatrist. In high school, he'd supposedly been some sort of master hacker—so good at breaking into computer systems that he'd ended up on some random FBI list somewhere, or so the story went. Whether or not that was true, Mark was certainly a computer genius. He had also made a name for himself at Exeter when, after he had honed his coding skills creating a computerized version of the game Risk, he and a buddy had created a software program called Synapse, a plug-in for MP3 players that allowed the players to “learn” a user's preferences and create tailored playlists based on that information. Mark had posted Synapse as a free download on the Web—and almost immediately, major companies came calling, trying to buy Mark's creation. Rumor was, Microsoft had offered Mark between one and two million dollars to go work for them—and amazingly, Mark had turned them down.

Eduardo wasn't an expert on computers, and he knew very little about hacking, but business ran in his family, and the idea that someone would turn down a million dollars was fascinating—and a little bit appalling—to him. Which made Mark more of an enigma than even his awkwardness implied. An enigma—and obviously a genius. He'd followed Synapse up with a program he'd written at Harvard, something called Course Match that allowed Harvard kids to see what classes other kids had signed up for; Eduardo had checked it out himself once or twice, trying to track down random hot girls he'd met in the dining hall, to little avail. But the program was good enough to get a pretty big following; most of the campus appreciated Course Match—if not the kid who'd created it.

As the three other frat brothers moved off toward the punch bowl for a refill, Eduardo took the opportunity to study the moppet-haired sophomore a little closer. Eduardo

had always prided himself on his ability to get to the core of other people's personalities—it was something his father had taught him, a way of getting a step ahead in the world of business. For his father, business was everything; the son of wealthy immigrants who had barely escaped the Holocaust to Brazil during World War II, his father had raised Eduardo in the sometimes harsh light of survivors; he came from a long line of businessmen who knew how important it was to succeed, whatever one's circumstances. And Brazil was only the beginning; the Saverin family had almost just as hastily been forced to relocate to Miami when Eduardo was thirteen—when it was discovered that Eduardo's name had ended up on a kidnap list because of his father's financial success.

By junior high, Eduardo had found himself adrift in a strange new world, struggling to learn a new language—English—and a new culture—Miami—at the same time. So he didn't know computers, but he understood, completely, what it was like being the awkward outsider; being different, whatever the reason.

Mark Zuckerberg, from the looks of him, was obviously different. Maybe it was just that he was so damn smart, he didn't fit in, even here, among his peers. Among his own kind: not Jewish, per se, but kids like him. Geeky kids who made algorithms out of fetishes, who had nothing better to do on a Friday night than hang out in a classroom filled with crepe paper and colored posters, talking about girls they weren't actually getting.

"This is fun," Mark finally said, breaking the silence. There was almost zero inflection in his voice, and it was impossible for Eduardo to guess what emotion—if any—he was trying to convey.

"Yeah," Eduardo responded. "At least the punch has rum in it this year. Last time, I think it was Capri Sun. They went all out this time around."

Mark coughed, then reached out toward one of the crepe-paper ribbons, touching the closest twist of material. The packing tape unhinged, and the ribbon drifted toward the floor, landing on his Adidas sandal. He looked at Eduardo.

"Welcome to the jungle."

Eduardo grinned, despite the fact that he still couldn't be sure from Mark's monotone delivery if the kid was joking or not. But he was getting the sense that there was something really anarchistic going on behind the kid's blue eyes. He seemed to be taking everything in around him, even here, in a place with so little stimulus to grasp onto. Maybe he really was the genius everyone thought he was. Eduardo had the abrupt feeling that this was someone he wanted to befriend, to get to know better. Anyone who'd turned down a million dollars at seventeen was probably heading somewhere.

"I have a feeling this is gonna break up in a few minutes," Eduardo said. "I'm heading back to the river—Eliot House. What house are you in again?"

"Kirkland," Mark responded. He jerked his head toward the exit, on the other side of the stage. Eduardo glanced at their other friends, still at the punch bowl; they were all quad kids, so they'd be going in a different direction when the party ended. It was as good an opportunity as any to get to know the awkward computer genius. Eduardo nodded, then followed Mark through the sparse crowd.

"If you want," Eduardo offered as they wound their way around the stage, "there's a party on my floor we could check out. It's gonna suck, but certainly no worse than this."

Mark shrugged. They'd both been at Harvard long enough to know what to expect from a dorm party; fifty dudes and about three girls jammed into a small, coffinlike box of a room, while someone tried to figure out how to tap an illicit keg of really cheap beer.

“Why not,” Mark responded, over his shoulder. “I’ve got a problem set due tomorrow, but I’m better at logarithms drunk than sober.”

A few minutes later, they had pushed their way out of the lecture room and into the cement stairwell that descended to the ground floor. They took the steps in silence, bursting out through a pair of double doors into the tree-lined quiet of Harvard Yard. A stiff, crisp breeze whipped through the thin material of Eduardo’s shirt. He jammed his hands into the deep pockets of his slacks and started forward down the paved path that led through the center of the Yard. It was a good ten-minute walk to the houses on the river, where both he and Mark lived.

“Shit, it’s fucking ten degrees out here.”

“More like forty,” Mark replied.

“I’m from Miami. It’s ten degrees to me.”

“Then maybe we should run.”

Mark took off at a slow jog. Eduardo followed suit, breathing hard as he caught up to his new friend. They were side by side as they moved past the impressive stone steps that led up to the pillared entrance to Widener Library. Eduardo had spent many evenings lost in the stacks of Widener—poring through the works of economic theorists such as Adam Smith, John Mills, even Galbraith. Even after one in the morning, the library was still open; warm orange light from inside the marbled lobby splashed out through the glass doors, casting long shadows down the magnificent steps.

“Senior year,” Eduardo huffed as they skirted the bottom stone step on their way to the iron gate that led out of the Yard and off into Cambridge, “I’m going to have sex in those stacks. I swear, it’s gonna happen.”

It was an old Harvard tradition—something you were supposed to do before you graduated. The truth was, only a handful of kids had ever actually achieved the mission. Though the automated stacks—vast bookshelves on